

REMARKS

We are in receipt of the Office Action dated December 23, 2004, and the above amendment and following remarks are made in light thereof.

Claims 1-5, 14-30 and 102 are pending in the application.

All of the pending claims are rejected for either anticipation over Ehrfeld et al. 4,872,888 or obviousness over Ehrfeld et al. further in view of Van Rijn 5,753,014.

Claim 1 is the only independent claim pending in the application. Pursuant to the foregoing amendment, claim 1 requires the filter membrane to comprise a filter layer, a support layer. By way of the present amendment, the filter layer is made of a first material, while the support layer is made of a second material the same as or sufficiently similar to the first material so as to be capable of chemically bonding therewith. In addition, the filter membrane includes a line of distinction defining an interface between the filter layer and the support layer that is not reasonably discernible. Support for the newly-added limitations can be found in various locations throughout the specification, including page 6, lines 19-25, page 10, lines 2-8, page 21, line 32 - page 22, line 4, and page 36, lines 13-19. Ehrfeld et al., either alone or in combination with Van Rijn, fails to disclose or suggest a filter membrane with a line of distinction defining an interface between the filter layer and the support layer that is a non-discriminable. More particularly, the filter membrane of specifically, Ehrfeld et al. is a cast in a mold, see Col. 3, lines 47-54. Thus, no interface exists between the filter layer and the support layer. In Van Rijn, there is a clearly discernible interface between the filter layer and the support layer. See, e.g., Figs. 8c, 15b, 29, and 34. As claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, each of the remaining claims, being dependent from claim 1, is allowable for at least the same reason as claim 1 is allowable.

Accordingly, applicant submits that the claims pending in the application are patentable over the prior art of record and allowance of the claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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